

Congressman Jesse Jackson, Jr., today said, "I want to commend and support the educational leaders and the lawyers for Thornton School District 205 and Thornton Fractional School District 215 for standing up forthrightly so that all students may receive a high quality *desegregated* public education. I'm inclined to file an *amicus curiae* brief in support of their lawsuit.

The suit alleges that I-57 is a Mason-Dixon line for *school sports*. But the sports divide grows out of many other divides. Property taxes are higher and Section 8 housing is more plentiful - while economic opportunities are *lower*

- east of I-57 than west. The Metra lines east of I-57 are the oldest in the system. As a consequence these and many other divides, school performance is typically lower east of I-57. And even though the people east of I-57 came up with the plan and the money to build a third airport, those living west of I-57 feel *entitled*

to control it. Why then should we be surprised that those west of I-57 want to separate themselves athletically from those living east of I-57?

"Athletics and sports competition are good for our students physically, emotionally and socially. Some of our greatest American heroes, Jesse Owens, Jackie Robinson and Frank Robinson were sports stars who used their athletic status to break down racial barriers and improve our society. Many students love athletic competition and through sports they get to know and learn to appreciate other people, races and ethnic groups. They develop friendships and memories that last a lifetime. We should not deprive our young people of such opportunities because adults feel the need to draw arbitrary racial Mason-Dixon lines as the lawsuit alleges in the breakup of the SICA sports conference.

"With the ability to travel and communicate on a worldwide basis, we are obviously living increasingly in a one-world community. All of my adult life and as a public official I have supported the idea that our children are best served and best educated in a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural educational setting. Discrimination of any kind not only hurts the victims but the perpetrators as well. For us to be whole as a nation or as a person, we need to work to rid ourselves of all forms of discrimination.

"It's in that spirit that I hope all discrimination will voluntarily end in the south suburbs, but if the

allegations are proven, I also hope the judge will enforce the law firmly but fairly so that all of our children, in the words of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., will learn to live together as brothers and sisters and not die apart as fools," Jackson concluded.